

**State Board of Victim Services Retreat**  
**Surratt House, Clinton, MD**  
**October 6, 2011**

Attendees: Ellen Alexander, Barbara Bond, Jeanne Cooper, Walter Coryell, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger, Kristen Mahoney, Patricia Marshall, Kathleen O'Brien, Margery Patten, Roberta Roper, Bonnita Spikes, Debra Tall, Frank Weathersbee, Virginia Wolf, and Jeanne Yeager

Staff: Shirley Haas, Anne Litecky

Guests: Lisae Jordan (Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault), Adam Rosenberg (Baltimore City Child Advocacy Center), Sandra Harper (Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office), Candace Parrott (Maryland State's Attorney's Association)

Facilitator: Sandy Bromley

The following is a summary report of the activities, discussions and decisions made at the October 6, 2011 State Board of Victim Services (Board) Retreat.

After brief introductions, the Board was presented with a section of the pre-retreat anonymous survey results, as they pertained to the Board member's expectations for the retreat:

**Expectations: Survey Results**

*What do you believe is the purpose of the Board's retreat?*

- Improving the Board's processes (meeting structure, communication amongst Board members, etc.): 64.3%
- Brainstorming Future Board Activities: 60%
- Revisiting the Board's mandates & ensuring Board is in compliance: 53.3%
- Team Building: 46.7%

*What do you expect to get out of the Board retreat?* (Respondents could choose more than one response.)

- A plan for better coordination of victim services in the state: 73.3%
- Clear and measurable goals for myself as a Board member: 66.7%
- More effective working relationships with my fellow Board members: 53.3%
- A better understanding of what the Board is tasked with accomplishing: 50%
- A new venture/public outreach campaign that the Board is responsible for: 46.7%

The Board then reviewed the agenda (see Appendix A), discussed ground rules for a successful retreat and engaged in an ice breaker activity in an effort to get to know their colleagues better.

## **Purpose & Perception**

The Board next reviewed the **purpose** and goals of the Board. The Board was provided with a handout containing their legislative mandates (see Appendix B) and, as a large group, revisited those mandates and assessed their current levels of compliance with mandated responsibilities.

*Facilitator's Notes:* At the end of the retreat, many Board members cited this activity as being very helpful in that they really didn't understand what the Board was tasked with accomplishing. Sometimes, a clear reminder of the basic goals and tasks the group is responsible for can help with strategic planning and goal setting.

Following the mandate discussion, the Board was provided with the results of two anonymous, pre-retreat surveys – one completed by victim service providers from across the state and one completed by Board members. The anonymous surveys were designed to provide Board members with an accurate understanding of the **perception** of the Board and the work they were, or were not, doing.

From the provider's survey, Board members seemed most surprised that only about half of the respondents knew what the Board does or knew a Board member. In a discussion about addressing this issue, Board members ideas included:

1. Providing more education and outreach to providers across the state and learning from those providers, possibly through site visits (later in the day, Board members discussed the possibility of the Board assisting with grantee site visits);
2. Attending and presenting Board information at partner meetings (e.g., Maryland Victim Service Provider's Association, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault and other regional provider's meetings);
3. Expanding Board membership to include representatives from different types of victimization (e.g., human trafficking, children, homicide, identity theft, etc.); and
4. Designate a Board member for each jurisdiction to act as a 'convener' or coordinator of all victim services in their jurisdiction (coordinating law enforcement, state's attorney's office, and community based providers).

In the Board member's survey, many issues concerned communication or process problems. A common response was the need for improvements in Board meeting management – limiting bickering and negativity and increasing respect and congeniality, and asking Board members to come prepared to contribute. A second common response was a recommendation to make the Board's processes more open and transparent – from holding open meetings to decide on legislative priorities to creating a more streamlined, open and fair process for grant reviews. Finally, many Board members agreed that committee work is a powerful tool for Board, however, that the Board committees have (1) not met regularly; (2) are not engaged; (3) have produced limited work; or (4) have not lived up to their potential.

## **SWOT Analysis**

Following pre-retreat Board member interviews and an analysis of the anonymous surveys, the facilitator chose to address the communication and process issues through a group analysis of the status of the Board (as opposed to a strategic planning session, which would be a recommended second step).

The group was divided into four small teams and asked to undergo a SWOT Analysis of the Board – to determine the Board's **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. The Strengths and Weaknesses teams were asked to describe the Board's *internal* attributes that were positive or negative, accordingly. The Opportunities and Threats teams were asked to consider *external* possibilities and limitations, accordingly.

The teams were asked to brainstorm about all possibilities in each of the categories. The following is a complete list of the results from each team:

### **Strengths**

- **Board has mandates (to refer to/rely upon)**
- **Expertise of Board members**
- Regular meetings/Email – good flow of information
- Have the ability to get information out
- Board has staff
- Board has compassion/care about each other
- Board has ability to look at General AND Specific crime victim issues
- **Board is comprised of high-level decision makers**
- Board has Victim and Victim Service Providers voices
- **Board has diversity – rural and urban representatives**
- Maryland is known as a leader in the victim field (Roberta specifically)
- Board has legislatively-mandated funding streams
- Credibility of Board in Maryland and nationally
- Ability to host statewide events

### **Weaknesses**

- Committee effectiveness – need better structure
- Coordinator's Role – Who does she work for? The Board? GOCCP?
- Board supports legislative agenda of MCVRC
- Board doesn't recognize their stakeholders
- No mention of DV Month – In touch?
- Annual Report was never vetted by Board – a legislative mandate
- Only time Board is heard about is when there is conflict
- Don't have term limits for Board members and Committee chairs need to rotate
- Don't connect to service providers in a meaningful way – no pulse on trends
- Broadness of Board mandates
- Works beyond [outside of] the legislative mandates – no measurable goals
- Not enough membership representing all victim populations
- Who does the work of the Board? Chair? Executive Committee?
- Do we need the committee structure we have? Do they support the legislative mandates?
- **Perceived conflicts of interest**
- **Location not conducive to a positive meeting**
- **Disrespect among Board members**
- **Don't know how effective the grants are filling in gaps/Need for more grants?**

### **Opportunities**

- Elevate the importance of *caring* for crime victims
- **Provide money to/for victim services**
- Training/Outreach on crime victims' rights
- Invite public; be more welcoming/open: larger room, more accessible, publicize widely (not just Steve Hess list), community colleges?
- **Outreach to victims in MD – send message that the State recognizes their needs**
- **Use Social Media and e-communications to share success, news and grant information**
- Networking/Referrals between Nonprofits and Government
- **Suggest Legislation to enhance Victim Services**
- Provide Educational Opportunities to/for Police/Prosecutors/Courts/Victim Service Providers
- Re-establish/Re-connect with Victim Service Providers
- Outreach to underserved groups (transgender, Latina, Asian, etc.)- both victims and providers

### **Threats**

- **Cuts in all Government Funding Sources**
- **Competition amongst Service Genre for Funding**
- Crisis Fatigue
- Perceived Insularity and Lack of External Participants
- NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) and Not My Problem
- Numbers of victims limit concern of general public
- Lack of outside understanding of the importance of the Board
- **Relevance (from outside perspective)**
- **Politics (Legislative Whimsy) – May affect funding decisions for Victim Services**

Following a discussion of New Business (see Appendix D), members were then asked to vote on their top two Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats in order for the Board to create a list of the top four in each category. The top four are featured in **BOLD** above.

## **Overcoming Threats and Capitalizing on Opportunities**

Groups took one of the top four weaknesses and top four threats and developed strategies for turning them into strengths or opportunities:

1. Grant effectiveness/Competition for Funding (combined):
  - a. Evaluations of grantees (site visits – having grant committee help)
  - b. Policy-informed NOFA's (utilizing Board member expertise in ensuring best practices in service provision are required in NOFA's)
  - c. Ensuring that good people get the money
2. Perceived Conflicts of Interest:
  - a. Continually work to ensure diversity on Board – adhere to term limits, encourage folks from various sectors/crime type/geographic regions/etc.
  - b. Ensure committees are multi-disciplinary
  - c. GOCCP should develop stringent disclosure forms (regarding Board member's employment, volunteer or fundraising activities, alliances, etc.) and require all Board members to complete annually
3. Funding/Budget cuts:
  - a. Ensure that the NOFA is advertised to ALL (let people know MVOC is available, even as VOCA/VAWA are cut)
  - b. Keep record of number of good applications that didn't get funded (to report back to legislature)
4. Disrespect amongst Board members:
  - a. Keep true to open meeting principles/processes
  - b. Focus on consensus building
  - c. Remain open to stakeholders
  - d. Maintain issue-oriented attention
5. Perception/Relevance of Board:
  - a. Increase public awareness/outreach (expand the reach of the Board to new partners, not just the typical victim services lists)
  - b. Reinvigoration of Board activities through new mediums, e.g. social media (Facebook and Twitter), bus ads, PSA's, coordinate with Governor's county events, having Board members enroll in speaker's bureaus, wear an ID at all events that announces they are a Board member
  - c. Rotate meetings throughout state
  - d. Engage stakeholders – invite locals to meetings in their jurisdiction, make sure they are heard
6. Meeting location not conducive to positive meetings:
  - a. Rotate meetings to different areas
  - b. Attempt to meet at the Judicial Training Center or another location large enough to facilitate members and visitors
7. Politics (Legislative Whimsy):
  - a. Coordinate through GOCCP's legislative liaison (Board members should be available to consult with legislators in their districts)
  - b. More open communication during and between Board meetings re: legislative priorities
  - c. Announce the new Board chair to the legislature when that person is appointed (have AG or Chief Judge write announcement letter)
8. Compliance with Mandates
  - a. List mandates on all meeting agendas
  - b. At the end of every meeting, briefly assess how what Board did/plans to do fits within the mandates and whether mandates are left out

## **Evaluation**

The following are the results of a post-retreat anonymous survey of Board members:

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Including everyone in the discussion**

- 70% Very Effective
- 20% Effective
- 10% Somewhat Effective

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Moving the team forward to make progress**

- 60% Very Effective
- 30% Effective
- 10% Somewhat Effective

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Using time wisely**

- 90% Very Effective
- 10% Effective

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Managing conflict appropriately**

- 50% Very Effective
- 20% Effective
- 10% Somewhat Effective
- 10% Ineffective
- 10% Not Sure

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Setting retreat goals**

- 70% Very Effective
- 20% Effective
- 10% Somewhat Effective

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Monitoring the performance of the team**

- 50% Very Effective
- 30% Effective
- 20% Somewhat Effective

### **Please indicate the statement that best describes the effectiveness of the facilitator in: Helping to bring out new group ideas**

- 50% Very Effective
- 50% Effective

**What was the best thing you observed at the retreat?**

- The facilitator did an excellent job with a challenging and opposing group of individuals. She kept the group on task and maintained their respect during the course of the day.
- Moving us forward from problem to solution
- Ability to manage tension and conflict, while moving a recalcitrant group forward towards a common goal. Excellent job!!!
- It was carried out in a timely fashion.
- People more civil
- The fact that we were able to address underlying issues head on and make real progress.
- People participated but they still made digs and contrary comments to people and still used their blackberries to correspond.
- Spirit of Cooperation & Perseverance
- Everyone paid attention and was cooperative.
- You did a great job of facilitating discussion of Board issues

**What was the most troubling thing you observed at the retreat?**

- The usage of the blackberries and the remarks meant to spark people that were repeated several times in the groups and in the full group. Also, someone not in the yellow group put a contrary remark about MCVRC on their yellow note cards and stuck it up.
- On-going persistence with negative personal opinions without open & honest discussion (on the part of a few individual Board members).
- The loss of the number of people needed to take a vote shortly before the retreat was scheduled to end.
- While I understand that Board member understanding of certain responsibilities such as grant reviews the Board did not discuss nor commit to improving services to victims. This is the same problem that has been going on for years. Seems again the members want to be on the Board but not really do anything.
- The possibility of going from one controlling group of individuals to another. Little cohesiveness, respect or civility amongst victim service professionals. Very sad example for the state.
- Obvious factions - one-sided participation
- The inability of some to recognize the conflict of interest issues
- Visitors did not feel welcomed by facilitator; some board members were disrespectful to others; unnecessary plants on them.
- Lack of thanking Roberta for all her years of service by the Director of GOCCP
- Nothing

**State Board of Victim Services Retreat**  
**Surratt House, Clinton, MD**  
**October 6, 2011**  
**10am to 4pm**

- I. Welcome and Introductions (10:00 am to 10:20 am)**
  - a. Overview of Agenda
  - b. Ground Rules

- II. Purpose & Perception (10:20 am to 12:00 pm)**
  - a. Board's Mandates
  - b. Survey Results
  - c. SWOT analysis

***LUNCH 12:00 am to 12:30 pm***

- III. New Business (12:30 pm to 1:30 pm)**
  - a. Term Limits for Board's chair positions
    - i. Board Chair
    - ii. Standing Committees
  - b. Grant Review Process

- IV. Next Steps (1:30 pm to 4:00 pm)**
  - a. Overcoming Threats and Capitalizing on Opportunities
  - b. Moving Forward
    - i. Accountability
    - ii. Evaluation

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*To ensure that all crime victims in the State of Maryland receive justice and are treated with dignity and compassion through comprehensive victim services.*



## ***Appendix B: Board Mandates***

### **Maryland State Board of Victim Services**

**Mission Statement:** *To ensure that all crime victims in the State of Maryland receive justice and are treated with dignity and compassion through comprehensive victim services.*

#### **Board Mandates**

*[\$11-914: General; §11-919: Grant]*

1. Annual written report to Governor (including information on the administration of the Fund)
2. Monitor the service needs of victims
3. Advise the Governor on victim needs
4. Recommend the appointment of the Victim Services Coordinator (to GOCCP)
5. Review and approve the Victim Services Coordinator's (VSC's) plans and annual reports and the VSC's implementation, operation and revision of programs
  - a. VSC Legislative Mandates:
    - i. Provide staff support to the Board on victim service matters
    - ii. Monitor, assess, and make recommendations on State and local victim compensation programs and procedures
    - iii. Provide technical assistance to local public and private programs that provide victim assistance
    - iv. Research and gather data on victims and victim assistance programs and disseminate that data to the public
    - v. Submit to Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of Public Safety & Correctional Services, and the Board an annual report that includes recommendations on how to improve victim assistance programs (same as #1)
    - vi. Ensure that the rights of victims are observed
    - vii. Help victims to get the information to which they have a right
    - viii. Monitor compliance with the guidelines for treatment of and assistance to victims and witnesses under 11-1002 & 1003.
  - b. Other VSC duties:
    - i. Implementation and management of VINE contract
    - ii. Crime Victims' Rights Week
      1. Statewide Memorial Services
      2. Governor's Awards Luncheon
    - iii. Roper Victim Assistance Academy

6. Approve or disapprove each MOVC grant application submitted by GOCCP
  - a. Ensure grant purpose is one of the following:
    - i. Carry out Article 47
    - ii. Carry out guidelines for the treatment & assistance for victims and witnesses of crime & delinquent acts [provided in 11-1002 and 11-1003]
    - iii. Carry out any laws enacted to benefit victims and witnesses
    - iv. Supporting child advocacy centers
  - b. Ensure Legal Services for Crime Victims Fund: unclaimed restitution money [17-317(a)(3)(i)] goes to legal counsel for victims' rights issues
  - c. Ensure grants to child advocacy centers [11-923]: support the development and operation of CACs; supplement and not supplant current funding; annual report to legislature re: CACs.
  - d. Ensure equitable distribution of grants: grants should be equitably distributed among all purposes of the fund (see a)
7. Advise the State's Attorney's Coordinating Council on the adoption of regulations governing the administration of the Victim/Witness Protection and Relocation Program; Advise the State's Attorney's Coordinator on the administration of the Program
8. Develop pamphlets to notice victims of Art. 47 & state law rights, services and procedures:
  - a. Brochure 1 (Crime Victims and Witnesses: Your Rights and Services)
  - b. Brochure 2 (Your Rights as a Victim in the Criminal or Juvenile Justice Process)
9. Develop a notification request form (Crime Victim Notification Request and Demand for Rights Form)

***Appendix C: Pre – Retreat Survey Results*** (see Memo to Board dated 10/5/11)

## *Appendix D: New Business*

### I. Approval of Minutes

Board members were asked to review and approve the meeting minutes of the June 1, 2011 Board meeting. Kathleen O'Brien moved to approve the minutes as drafted, Ellen Alexander seconded that motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### II. Board Chair Recruitment

As the current chair, Roberta Roper, announced her resignation from the Board in the morning, the Board voted unanimously on the method for replacing her position:

- Post application for nomination to chair position on GOCCP website by November 1, 2011 with the due date of November 30, 2011
- Publicize call for nomination widely (inc. email to listservs, including MD Community Locator)
- Use description of chair duties listed in Policies & Procedures manual for announcement.
- Nominations Committee: members of committee will be decided during December meeting (Board members decided to re-open all Committee membership at the December meeting)
- Nominations Committee meets between December 1<sup>st</sup> and December 15th; Nominations vetted to a maximum of 3 applicants
- Full board vote on 3 applicants during January, 2012 meeting
- Submit 3 applicants to the Governor; he chooses one or appoints someone of his choosing.
- New Chair will hopefully be in place for the March 7, 2012 meeting.

### III. Term Limits for Board Chair

In an effort to maintain consistency with Board leadership, but also allow for fresh ideas and thinking, Board members voted unanimously to enact term limits for the Board chair (via the Board's Policies & Procedures manual). The Chair will be selected as described above and their term will last three (3) years, with a possible three (3) year term extension.

Additionally, the Board passed unanimously to include a second clause in the Policies & Procedures manual regarding positions appointed by state agencies (ex: Chief Judge). The Board voted to limit those Board member terms to 5 years (in line with the other Board member terms), with the Board chair responsible for writing the state agency requesting a new nomination for the Board every 5 years.

### IV. Recruitment of Standing Committee Chairs

The Board voted unanimously to have each standing committee nominate a chair to lead them, then propose that nominee to the Board Chair, who would have ultimate authority to appoint the standing committee chair.

### V. Term Limits for Standing Committee Chairs

The Board then decided to impose term limits for those standing committee chairs. A majority vote determined that the committee chairs would have two-year (2-year) term limits, with a possible two (2) year term extension. Frank Weathersbee and Rea Goldfinger abstained from the vote.

VI. Grant Review Process: Board members addressed some of the survey results regarding the transparency of the Board's grant review process. Despite best efforts, the process may appear to outsiders as biased or with potential conflicts of interest. In an effort to address these concerns, the Board discussed options for altering the process. Two proposals were set forth in the discussion:

1. The Grant Committee retains control of the policy and final acceptance of the review process, but utilizes independent grant reviewers to conduct the actual application reviews.
  - Grant committee (with Board majority vote approval) creates the NOFA requirements. This is a way for the Board to ensure best practices and good policy are included as requirements for grantees (i.e. ensuring that grantees participate in a CCR in their jurisdiction, have at least x number of partners working together on the grant, have methods for screening out offenders from receiving services, etc.).
  - Grant committee (with Board majority vote approval) creates the Grant Review Score Sheet (containing NOFA requirements and the Board/GOCCP's priorities, e.g. ensuring that there are grantees in each jurisdiction or for each crime type).
  - GOCCP staff (if possible) can screen out applications who don't comply with the basic NOFA requirements prior to grant reviews (e.g., ensuring they have the necessary number of letters of support, etc.).
  - VSC (Anne), with the help of Board and GOCCP, recruits independent grant reviewers. At least three people should be looking at each grant, so the number of reviewers depends somewhat on the number of applications received.
  - Independent reviewers review applications utilizing the Board-approved Score Sheet. Once the three reviewers conduct an individual review, they meet (typically via conference call) to discuss the application, their three individual scores and come to a consensus on final scores for the application.
  - The final score sheet goes back to the Grant committee, who reviews to ensure Board and GOCCP priorities are addressed (jurisdictions/crime types/etc.). The top scorers, combined with Board and GOCCP priorities, are selected and forwarded to ED of GOCCP for approval.
  - Board has majority vote final approval of grant applications (should be done in open meeting).

or

2. The Board can continue their existing process, but ensure there are an equal number of independent grant reviewers as members of the grant committee.

The Board concluded that they would vote on the first proposal only. The proposal won a majority vote (12 in favor; Mr. Weathersbee and Ms. Tall were not in favor; Ms. Goldfinger and Chief Coryell abstained from the vote).

The Board also discussed changing the name of the Grants committee to the "Grant Review Committee." The grant review committee can be responsible for assisting GOCCP staff with grant monitoring and compliance, the management of grant funding and possibly even assisting with site visits. No votes were taken about any of these ideas.

VII. 2012 Board Meetings: Later, the Board decided to change the 2012 meeting schedule back to an every-other-month schedule, therefore, meeting on January 4<sup>th</sup>, March 7<sup>th</sup>, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, July 11<sup>th</sup>, September 5<sup>th</sup>, and November 7<sup>th</sup> in 2012.